

Request for Scoping Comments
Middle Fork Vegetation Management Project
USDA – FOREST SERVICE
Northern Region
Nez Perce – Clearwater National Forests
Moose Creek Ranger District
Idaho County, Idaho

The Moose Creek Ranger District is preparing an environmental analysis for the Middle Fork Vegetation Management Project. The District is proposing to use a combination of commercial timber harvest, prescribed fire culvert replacements and road decommissioning within the Middle Fork project area in order to increase the representation of young forest and early successional habitats; trend tree species composition towards more resilient species and reduce road related impacts to the watershed and protect aquatic species in the area. Mechanical harvest and prescribed fire would be applied on up to 2300 acres to modify vegetative conditions towards more natural disturbance patterns followed by replanting with early seral species to shift species compositions towards increased landscape resilience. Within the proposed mechanical harvest areas, the logging systems are expected to be helicopter, tractor and skyline. Temporary road construction would be necessary and would be decommissioned when activities needing those roads were completed. Helicopter landings within the Wild and Scenic River corridor would be likely. Prescribed fire would be used to treat activity fuels and facilitate site preparation for planting ponderosa pine, white pine, and western larch. Approximately 2-3 miles of road decommissioning would target roads not needed for future management and/or those segments causing negative watershed impacts. Culvert replacements would be focused on right sizing and/or allowing for aquatic organism passage.

The project area is in Idaho County, Idaho and encompasses the 13,576 acres of National Forest Lands within the Middle Fork Clearwater watershed. This area is on the south side of the Middle Fork Clearwater River and extends from the Forest boundary (approximately 2.5 miles southwest of the community of Syringa) upstream to the community of Lowell. Please see attached maps for Legal descriptions. The river corridor in this area is classified as a “recreation” segment of the Middle Fork Clearwater Wild and Scenic River System. The full proposed action and maps are available for review on the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest website: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/nezperceclearwater> under the NEPA projects.

How to Comment and Timeframe

This comment period provides those interested in or affected by this project an opportunity to make their concerns known. Comments received in response to this solicitation, including names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record and will be available for public inspection.

Written, facsimile, hand-delivered, and oral comments will be accepted for 30 calendar days following publication of this notice. The publication date in this newspaper is the exclusive means for calculating the comment period for this proposal. You should not rely upon dates or timeframe information provided by any other source.

Written comments must be submitted to: **Joe Hudson, District Ranger, Moose Creek Ranger District, 831 Selway Road, Kooskia, ID 83539**. For those submitting hand-delivered comments: the Moose Creek Ranger District office hours are: 7:30 AM to 4:00 PM; Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. Electronic comments should be submitted in rich text format (.rft) or Word (.doc) to comments-northern-nezperce-moose-creek@fs.fed.us. Oral comments must be provided to his office during normal office hours via telephone (208) 926-8930, or by facsimile (208) 926-8925 or in person.

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